



October 28, 2009

TO: Members of the House Education Committee:

Please accept this as a Letter of Support from Munson Medical Center for Northwestern Michigan College's efforts to offer a baccalaureate degree in Nursing.

As a Magnet Nursing Program and a Top 100 Hospital, it is essential that Munson and its surrounding hospitals have access to high quality trained nurses. Over the years we have had a very successful and vital partnership with Northwestern Michigan College.

Having a BSN option offered by Northwestern Michigan College would be a more cost effective choice for the nurses in northern Michigan to achieve their baccalaureate degree than completing it at a state university. It would also enable nurses to complete their BSN degree and continue living in northern Michigan.

Please feel free to call me with any questions at (231) 935-6910. Once again, we full heartedly and enthusiastically support this initiative by Northwestern Michigan College.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edwin Ness', written over a horizontal line.

Edwin Ness
President and CEO

EAN:kah

October 25, 2009

Two years ago I began my studies at Gogebic Community College in Ironwood, Michigan, with a goal of obtaining my Associate's Degree in nursing. My long-term goal is to earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. The majority of my classmates also want to earn their BSN so they can have more career opportunities, earn higher wages, and provide better nursing care to our community. Many of the nursing fields in which my classmates and I want to be employed require a BSN. These include working in specialty fields, mental illness facilities, and serving as nurses in the military. However, there are limited options for us to earn a BSN in this part of the state.

Location is a key obstacle for us. We live over two hours away from the nearest Michigan university that offers a BSN. In order to attend this university, we would have to manage excessive daily commute times; leave our families during the week and maintain two residences; or uproot our families, move near the university, and find new jobs. As a result, many of us who have the desire to continue our education would not, thus potentially limiting the level of care we could provide our community. Some of those who would continue their education under the present circumstances would need to relocate, thus taking their knowledge base and financial resources away from our community.

One option for us to earn our BSN degrees would be to utilize online learning. While online learning is a valuable resource and is utilized at Gogebic Community College in the nursing program, my classmates and I feel strongly that face-to-face learning is critical for many courses because it provides hands-on experiences. Nursing is a hands-on profession that requires complex teamwork with other nursing and medical professionals to provide quality care for patients, and the preparation for this is best accomplished through face-to-face learning.

Another barrier to online learning for many of us is the lack of or inadequate access to high speed internet in our homes because we live in a remote area of the state. While Gogebic Community College provides opportunities for us to use the campus's technology resources, a program based solely on online learning is not feasible. We would not be able to do all our work using only the school's technology resources, and could not rely on the inadequate internet access in our homes for all of our classes.

Gogebic Community College is located in a rural and economically depressed part of the state. Adding a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program would financially benefit our area. Fellow classmates would spend their tuition and expendable income dollars locally; students would not feel compelled to move away to continue their education; and the program itself could potentially draw more students to this area, thus resulting in more community growth, a larger tax base, and a higher quality of health care.

One of the most important reasons why I think Gogebic Community College deserves the opportunity to offer the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program is because of the

superior quality of education the college already offers its nursing students. When I needed a tutor, one of my instructors told me to come to her instead of using a tutor – she wanted to ensure that I was able to fully understand the material. Every one of my instructors has shown me that he or she will do whatever it takes to prepare us to be highly qualified nurses so that we can provide our community with superior health care.

Our country is facing a critical nursing shortage. Expanding Gogebic Community College's nursing program to include a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program would help address the growing shortage of nurses in Michigan (estimated at 18,000 by 2015. Begnoche) and help "...to ensure every Michigan citizen receives world-class health care" (Granholm, March 6, 2007).

I graduated from high school thirty years ago. I am a wife, mother, grandmother, and fulltime caregiver for my mother. Gogebic Community College has allowed me to study locally in an outstanding nursing program. Like so many of my fellow classmates who are also non-traditional students, I am looking forward to having the ability to earn my Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from this outstanding institution so that I can contribute in providing high quality health care to my community and the state of Michigan.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity for this testimony.

Sincerely,

Nancy M. Dalpiaz, LPN
ADN Student Gogebic Community College

Begnoche, Michelle. "Governor Granholm Highlights Plan to Address Michigan Nursing Shortage". March 6, 2007. October 25, 2009 http://mi.gov/gov/0,1607,7-168-45547_45548-163714--,00.html

ALPENA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT
COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCAULAUREATE AUTHORITY
April 29, 2008**

WHEREAS, talent, defined as acquired knowledge and skills bringing innate human capacities to their fullest realization, is the single most conducive factor for a region's economic and community development;

WHEREAS, the goal of higher education is to cultivate talent in the aforementioned sense;

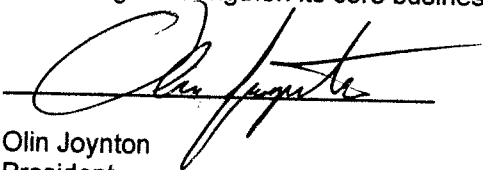
WHEREAS, due to the absence of a permanent university campus in Northeast Lower Michigan, and the great distances that must be traveled by residents to reach such campuses; the rate of bachelor's degree attainment for its citizens is only half the rate of the state as a whole;

WHEREAS, both the Lt. Governor's Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth and a recent study by an independent consultant for the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth advocate authority for public community colleges in Michigan to award applied baccalaureate degrees in selected fields of institutional strength characterized by strong labor market demand and inadequate university capacity;

WHEREAS, Alpena Community College has joined with other public community colleges to support efforts by the Michigan Community College Association to secure permissive legislation for such authority; and agreements have been announced for sponsorship of such legislation by State Senator Michael Switalski and State Representative Matt Gillard;

WHEREAS, Alpena Community College has embarked on a planning process to outline the best combination of baccalaureate programs for citizens of the area both through Northwood University in its Madeline Briggs University Center and through potential baccalaureate programs of its own;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Alpena Area Chamber of Commerce formally endorses legislation enabling public community colleges to award baccalaureate degrees and encourages Alpena Community College to pursue such planning endeavors as may lead to offering its own baccalaureate degrees, while continuing to strengthen its core business of certificate and associate degree programs.



Olin Joynton
President



Jackie Krawczak
Executive Director

Alpena County Board of Commissioners

720 CHISHOLM STREET, SUITE 7
ALPENA, MICHIGAN 49707

TELEPHONE: (989) 354-9500

FAX: (989) 354-9648

Resolution #09-22

ALPENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT

COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCAULAUREATE AUTHORITY

HB 4837 introduced by Representative John Walsh (R-Livonia)



WHEREAS, talent, defined as acquired knowledge and skills bringing innate human capacities to their fullest realization, is the single most conducive factor for a region's economic and community development;

WHEREAS, the goal of higher education is to cultivate talent in the aforementioned sense;

WHEREAS, due to the absence of a permanent university campus in Northeast Lower Michigan, and the great distances that must be traveled by residents to reach such campuses; the rate of baccalaureate degree attainment for its citizens is only half the rate of the state as a whole;

WHEREAS, both the Lt. Governor's Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth and a recent study by an independent consultant for the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth advocate authority for public community colleges in Michigan to award applied baccalaureate degrees in selected fields of institutional strength characterized by strong labor market demand and inadequate university capacity;

WHEREAS, the Community College Act of 1966 (PA 331, as amended) prohibits public community colleges from offering baccalaureate degrees;

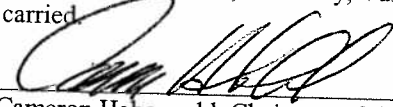
WHEREAS, public community colleges in 17 states now offer baccalaureate degrees in applied technology fields in response to strong labor market demand and lack of university capacity to meet demand;

WHEREAS, Alpena Community College has joined with other public community colleges to support efforts by the Michigan Community College Association to secure permissive legislation for such authority; and Representative John Walsh (R-Livonia) has introduced HB 4837, which would authorize community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees in concrete technology, nursing, and culinary arts;

WHEREAS, Alpena Community College has embarked on a planning process to outline the best combination of baccalaureate programs for citizens of the area both through Northwood University in its Madeline Briggs University Center and through potential baccalaureate programs of its own;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alpena County Board of Commissioners formally endorses HB 4837 and encourages Alpena Community College to pursue such planning endeavors as may lead to offering its own baccalaureate degrees, while continuing to strengthen its core business of certificate and associate degree programs.

Moved by Commissioner Mullaney and supported by Commissioner Bell to approve Resolution #09-22 as presented. Roll call vote was taken: AYES: Commissioners Bell, Thomas, Mullaney, VanWormer, Fournier, Hall, Estlack, and Habermehl. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

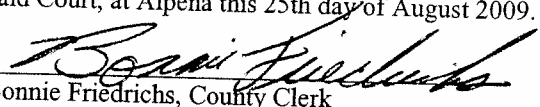

Cameron Habermehl, Chairman of the Board

STATE OF MICHIGAN)
County of Alpena)



I, Bonnie Friedrichs, Clerk of the Circuit Court for the County of Alpena, the same of Court of Record and having a seal do hereby certify that I have compared the annexed copy of the August 25, 2009 session and that it is a true and correct transcript therefrom and of the whole thereof.

IN TESTIMONY THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of said Court, at Alpena this 25th day of August 2009.


Bonnie Friedrichs, County Clerk



Home Builder's Association of the Holland Area

The Honorable John Walsh
Michigan State Representative of the 19th District
N0698 House Office Building
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Representative Walsh:

August 31, 2009

I want to inform you that we are interested in and supportive of the concept presented in House Bill 4837, a bill that would amend "The Community College Act of 1966" to allow community colleges the ability to establish education programs and grant baccalaureate degrees in certain high demand technical areas such as cement technology, nursing and culinary arts.

Access to affordable higher education and training is critical for Michigan's future workforce viability. We see community colleges as an important avenue for more citizens to gain access to an affordable alternative to four-year technical completion.

One of the most important areas for technological advance in construction practices are the relationships between structural engineering and foundation design, compression strength, aggregate suspension, soil conditions and hydration chemistry. We anticipate additional demands for education beyond secondary or technical center training. Pre-licensing and continuing competency education is quickly becoming benchmark requisites for career growth in construction management today.

Key technology areas such as structural design, alternative wind energy, envelope efficiencies, building science, infrared photography energy audits, HVAC sizing and ventilation, material choices and green building practices are disciplines with demand, interest and potential in the construction industry. Hopefully, the aforementioned technical areas specifically targeting emerging disciplines in construction management will be considered for inclusion in targeted baccalaureate degrees offered through the state's 28 community colleges in the future.

Thank you for your efforts to offer affordable and accessible higher education training for Michigan's workforce. We will be following this bill with interest as it makes its way through the Legislature.

Sincerely,

Bob Barker, HBA CEO

Cc: Joe Haveman

Cc: Mike Hansen

REC'D SEP 09 2009

